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Lida Baarova (1914–2000)

It would be possible to write a fairly interesting memoir about Lida Baarova dealing only with her career as an actress. So, first, a résumé. At 17 she was confidently taking on classical roles at the Czech National Theatre in Prague, where she was born. She made a number of films with a small avant-garde Czech company and was then signed up by Ufa, Germany's largest film studio and at that time one of the largest in the world.

Ufa valued Miss Baarova not so much for her avant-garde talents, but as a rival to the Hollywood stars whose films were dominating the European market. She gave good value. The romantic films she made enchanted the patrons of Ufa's 3,000 cinemas, but it has to be said that they will not be remembered as masterpieces of German cinema. One critic observed sniffily that Miss Baarova's main asset was her "generous build".

It was much later that Lida Baarova's acting gifts were recognised by directors. In 1957 Federico Fellini gave her a taxing role in "I Vitelloni". In 1970 Rainer Fassbinder, perhaps Germany's most innovative director of the post-war period, gave her a part in "The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant". Altogether, Miss Baarova made some 50 films over a period of 60 years.

She was disappointed that, despite her long connection with films, she was not better known. At the height of her fame Hollywood was beckoning. The reason why, unlike many film people, she stuck with Germany after Hitler came to power in 1933, provides another side to Lida Baarova's life, and perhaps the more interesting one.

Ufa became an instrument of the state under Hitler. Films, along with radio and newspapers, were the tools of persuasion put in the charge of Josef Goebbels, Hitler's propaganda chief. The light-weight films starring Lida Baarova were particularly highly regarded by Goebbels. Miss Baarova later recalled that he was "charming and intelligent". No doubt he was. He was the original spin doctor, working for the most controversial client in the world.

It is unclear whether Goebbels and Lida Baarova had sexual relations. David Irving, who has delved into the Hitler period as much as any historian, interviewed Miss Baarova in 1993. He concluded that they did not sleep together during their two-year affair. However, everyone in the Hitler circle seemed to have assumed they did. Goebbels's wife, Magda, complained to Hitler, and Hitler ordered the romance to end. Miss Baarova was content to see no more of Goebbels. But he, apparently, was distraught.

The time of their parting, late in 1938, coincided with *Kristallnacht*, when Goebbels organised anti-Jewish riots in Germany and Austria. Was that event, seen by Jews as a harbinger of the "final solution", driven in its beastliness by Goebbels's fury over the end of his affair? Germany at that time is sometimes presented as a strictly disciplined state, but its leaders could be as unstable as any politician under pressure.

Miss Baarova left Berlin soon after and returned to Prague. During the second world war she made a number of films in Italy. After the war she was accused, mysteriously, of being a spy for the Gestapo, and sentenced to two years in jail by one of the courts set up by the victors. She has left behind an autobiography which a German publisher says it aims to bring out soon.

Among Miss Baarova's friends were Winifred Wagner, a relative of the composer and a supporter of Hitler from his early days; Paula Hitler, the Fuhrer's younger sister; Unity Valkyrie Mitford, an English aristocrat who attempted suicide when Britain declared war on Germany; and so on. Their enthusiasm for the Nazi cause helped to encourage the majority of German women to support the system. Lida Baarova's own view of the regime remains unclear. Acting remained her passion. Her greatest mistake, she reckoned, was not taking up her Hollywood offers. "I could have been as famous as Marlene Dietrich," she said.

The Economist

1 What is suggested about Lida Baarova's life and career?

- A Her film career would hardly have made her a memorable person
- B Her interests as an actress seem to have been rather limited
- C Her acting career may not have been the most fascinating part of her life
- D Her professional attitude often clashed with her private life

2 What are we told about Lida Baarova's abilities as an actress?

- A Throughout her career they were overshadowed by her attractiveness
- B Her real qualities as an actress hardly showed in the Ufa films
- C They were never appreciated as much as they should have been
- D She was less suited to serious films than to films about romance

3 What is implied about Lida Baarova's affair with Josef Goebbels?

- A It has been proved that their relationship was not of a sexually intimate nature
- B Goebbels was more interested in Lida Baarova as a propaganda tool than as a lover
- C Their involvement came to an undramatic end after Goebbels's decision to leave Lida Baarova
- D Goebbels was more in love with Lida Baarova than she seemed to be with him

4 What is said about Lida Baarova's political views?

- A It can hardly be established that she was an active Nazi sympathiser
- B Her films in Germany during the war demonstrated her Nazi beliefs
- C She was just as much a Nazi as some of her closest friends
- D Her Gestapo connection proves her close ties with the Nazi party

5 What may be concluded about Lida Baarova?

- A Her talent as an actress was equal to that of Marlene Dietrich
- B Her Hollywood career came to nothing because of the war
- C Her interest in acting was far greater than her interest in politics
- D Her complex personal life helped to make her a great actress

Please turn over

The Genome and the Soul

The sequencing of genomes from organisms as diverse as bacteria, yeast, worms, flies, and, of course, ourselves, has moved biology beyond the study of individual genes to the study of all genes, making the genome an explicit object of investigation and representation. With the publication of the complete sequence of the human genome, often seen as a Promethean step in self-knowledge, the social and cultural effects of genomics are at the forefront of public awareness.

With the complete genome sequence now at hand, the notion that our genome is synonymous with our humanness is gaining strength. This view is a kind of “genomic metaphysics”: the genome is viewed as the core of our nature, determining both our individuality and our species identity. According to this view, the genome is seen as the true essence of human nature, with external influences considered as accidental events.

The notion that the genome contains the blueprint of human nature is akin to an important outlook within Western metaphysics that interprets all living organisms as having “souls,” which determine their characteristic traits. From this perspective, the human soul is viewed as encapsulating the human essence. Max Delbrück, a 20th-century pioneer of molecular biology, noted how the notion of a genetic program had an uncanny kinship with the Aristotelian concept of *eidos*, the organizing principle inherent in every living thing. Aristotle and medieval philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas regarded the concept of *eidos* as closely connected with the notion of a *forma* or “soul,” which was believed to shape matter into the recognizable form of a living organism. *Forma* was seen as imbuing an organism with individual characteristics, as well as the essence of that species.

Part of the *prima facie* plausibility of our genome as the definition of our humanness comes from the blending of ideas of nature, stability, immutability, and genes—if a trait is in the genes, there is nothing that can be done about it. This notion was already evident in the 1960s nature-versus-nurture con-

troversies about human intelligence—those siding with nature were skeptical about special educational efforts for the underprivileged, because low intelligence was supposed to be part of nature, that is, “in the genes” and therefore immutable. The rapid succession of discoveries and speculations about the genetic basis of psychiatric disease, alcoholism, and violence, and such recurring conundrums as the “homosexuality gene” have also left their mark on the public consciousness.

The view that the genome contains the essence of human nature raises several problems. One is exemplified by the recent storm-in-a-teacup raised in Central Europe by the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk, who speculates that “anthropo-technologies”—such as genetics-based programs to breed a more docile human race—will replace traditional humanistic education as the force shaping future generations. A similar problem arises out of discussions about genetic enhancement of human traits. In both cases, the genomic perspective brings a rather artificial pathos to the debate as it makes too absolute the division between genetic modification and external influences. Likewise, rationalizing all human behavior in terms of genes—a gene for violence, a gene for depression, a gene for impulsiveness—tends to trap the field of behavioral genetics between the opposing forces of genetic reductionism and the politically correct impulse to de-emphasize genes.

By placing all our hopes (and fears) in our genes, we are fueling the expectation that the human genome will be the last word about human nature. More than ever, we need a richer account of the human condition. To be a human person means more than having a human genome, it means having a narrative identity of one’s own. Likewise, membership in the human family involves a rich nexus of cultural links. On the question of human nature, we need a philosophical fresh start that cannot be provided by genomics alone.

Alex Mauron, Science

- 6 What are we told about genome research in the opening paragraph?**
- A Its scientific importance is less obvious than its social impact
 - B It is still too early to judge its relevance to biological science
 - C It is raising questions well beyond the limits of pure biology
 - D Its results indicate striking similarities between different species
- 7 How does “genomic metaphysics” see the relationship between the genome and specifically human characteristics?**
- A Our personalities are more or less exclusively shaped by the human genome
 - B Genetic and environmental factors are equally important in shaping human nature
 - C The human species is now able to minimize the influence of hostile environments
 - D The human genome can hardly explain the basic mental features of individual human beings
- 8 What is said about the genome in relation to older views on human nature?**
- A The genome provides definitive proof of the “soul”
 - B The genome may be seen as a biological version of the concept of *forma*
 - C The genome has little in common with the Aristotelian notion of *eidos*
 - D The genome can hardly replace traditional accounts of the “soul”
- 9 Why, according to the author, do some people regard the human genome as synonymous with humanness?**
- A They believe it is linked to constant properties of every human being
 - B It has been conclusively identified with normal human behavior
 - C They think it shows that education can make up for genetic disadvantages
 - D It promotes a new, more positive view of human nature
- 10 What is the author’s general conclusion?**
- A Scientific investigations into the human mind are likely to fail
 - B Only an exclusively cultural approach will shed more light on the human condition
 - C Human nature is too complex to be explained only in biological terms
 - D Biological considerations have no place in discussions about humanness

Please turn over

And here are some shorter texts:

Aluminium

Today a symbol of our throwaway culture, aluminium was not so long ago a precious metal. When a French scientist first extracted tiny pieces of it in 1845, the earth's most abundant metal was as valuable as gold and used in jewelry and precious objects. But only 10 years later, a new chemical extraction process made aluminium more easily obtainable, and from then on its lightness and durability was put to some surprising uses—such as an aluminium violin from the 1930s and the statue of Eros in London's Piccadilly Circus.

11 What are we told in this text?

- A Although aluminium remains an expensive metal, it is nowadays easy to extract
- B In the early 19th century aluminium was used for a variety of purposes
- C Aluminium shares important chemical properties with other rare metals
- D The public image of aluminium has changed a lot in the last two centuries

A Question of Mercy

The Netherlands became the first country in the world to allow “mercy killings” after the Senate approved a law permitting euthanasia. It was the last legislative step in formalizing what has been a common but discreet practice for years. Terminally ill people with “lasting and unbearable suffering” must obtain the approval of their doctors as well as an independent consultant.

12 What are we told here about the Dutch law referred to?

- A It will hardly change things beyond recognition
- B It is unlikely to improve the legal status of “mercy killings”
- C It will mean a totally different situation for most sick people
- D It is generally regarded as controversial

A New Faith

These days, with church attendance falling in many parts of the world, people worship in a different temple—the great outdoors. Yearning for something sacred, many have made nature an ersatz religion complete with high priests and dogma. To question that dogma—that Mother Earth is in bad shape and getting worse—is considered heresy.

13 What is the basic attitude expressed by the writer?

- A She regrets the fact that many people have stopped believing in God
- B She is worried about the future of the planet Earth
- C She is hopeful that God and nature may complement each other
- D She feels that belief in nature should not be above criticism

Adam Smith

When Adam Smith taught at Glasgow University in the 18th century, teachers were reimbursed directly by their students. The great economist admired this system, observing that a teacher's diligence "is likely to be proportioned to the motive which he has for exerting it". Alas, on today's campuses there are few Adam Smiths with a strong pecuniary incentive to heed their students' real wants. On the contrary, few other contemporary institutions possess such a solid sense of their own purpose, combined with such a haughty disregard of what their users and paymasters expect of them.

14 Which of the following statements is most in line with Adam Smith's view?

- A Students will be more willing to study efficiently if they pay for their own education
- B A teacher's prime concern should be teaching rather than making money at the expense of students
- C A system where teachers have an economic interest in their students will easily lead to corruption
- D Teachers can be expected to do a better job if they are paid by the students themselves

15 What else is implied about higher education?

- A Some modern universities would like to imitate Glasgow University in the 18th century
- B Students' needs are taken less into consideration today than in Adam Smith's times
- C The quality of teaching has nothing to do with the cost of higher education
- D Teachers' and students' educational goals rarely differ to a significant degree

In the following text there are gaps which indicate that something has been left out. Study the four alternatives that correspond to each gap and decide which one best fits the gap. Then mark your choice on the answer sheet.

Great Bookham

From an article by Nigel Nicolson

I can never go to Great Bookham in Surrey without thinking of Jane Austen and how her first visit there in 1814 resulted in one of her finest novels, *Emma*. Today it is not an attractive place. The church, some shops **16** defaced and a row of workmen's cottages are all that remains of the village that she knew. On the outskirts are courts and dinky cul-de-sacs, neat and eminently respectable, **17** lacking the personality that only mystery can bring—and mystery can only be brought by antiquity. But it is “Highbury” in *Emma*.

At least I think so. Jane Austen gives us some clues, but **18** her designation is deliberately vague, different scholars have identified Highbury differently. My main argument for Bookham is that she wrote part of the book there, as she was staying with her cousin and godfather, who was rector of the parish.

Her visit in the month of July lasted for a week or two, and one of her expeditions (she loved walking) was to Box Hill, the scene of the famous picnic when Emma snubbed Miss Bates. The **19** is too great to be explained away. Highbury must be Bookham.

In Bookham Jane Austen allowed herself, for once, to express her joy in the **20** As Emma looks across the valley, she finds it “a sweet view, sweet to the eye and mind ... with all its appendages of prosperity and beauty, its rich pastures, spreading flocks, orchards in blossom and light of smoke ascending.”

This is her famous error, the only one that scholars have detected. Orchards do not blossom in July. She was carried away, as I was.

The Sunday Telegraph

- 16** A brutally
B delightfully
C hurriedly
D skilfully
- 17** A rarely
B but
C not
D happily
- 18** A although
B until
C unless
D because
- 19** A reality
B writing
C coincidence
D puzzle
- 20** A past
B countryside
C morning
D mood

That is the end of the English test. If you have time left, go back and check your answers.